

inscape

Spring 2004

art and literary magazine

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THE BERLIN PIETÀ

The Soldier's Mother Finds Him on The Battlefield

V-E Day, 1945

It was a quickly-shot panorama of the battlefield, the camera held
by someone dispassionate,

A man who could look upon corpses in snow and not shake.

As the lens moved, he viewed frozen bodies, fragmented and
whole,

Black-and-white shambles sprawled easily upon each other in the
frozen mud.

A woman was there at the battlefield, grayish wrap covering her
head,

Featureless coat pulled close, her keening back to the photo-
grapher.

She knelt next to the corpse of a young man thrown face down in
the mud,

Uniform neat across his back, his trousers too dark for anything
but wounds and blood.

She sat by his head, weeping, and it broke my heart to see her

As she leaned to pat her boy's shoulder, to soothe his fright, now
long-gone,

To comfort her baby by patting him as every mother will, saying,
"Lie still now. Mother's here."

STAY WITH ME, BABY

At the Bette Midler concert,
that dazzling woman clawed my composure,
wrenched my careful memories askew
as she burnt her way through the song
Stay With Me, Baby.

Not that I could acknowledge the pain
right there--nope, had to stand still,
silent, next to my date of the moment
rather than next to the man her song invoked,
unexpectedly caught in the wrong place.
I thought enough time had passed.
I always think enough time has passed,
that I won't cry anymore
when surprised by a particular sequence
of notes, chords, words.

All night, I kept waking, dizzied by that refrain,
howling those words in the frenzied dreams
of my present cozy bedroom.

Stay with me, baby,
remembering Bette, grief defiant,
glamorous in a silver gown,
red hair swept high into elegance,
diamonds spotlighted to the balcony,
and my sudden rememberings camouflaged
by their bright reflections.

Where had I been
when I sang *stay with me, baby*,
for my audience?
Running down the driveway?
Screaming from the doorway?
Kneeling on the living room carpet?
Lying on the bed?
Curled into the telephone?

Jean Hull Herman

What's the best position
for begging and demanding
at the same time?

What are the magic words--
are there any words so potent
that, when heard, could compel him to stay?

Please, please, stay with me, baby,
just for a little while,
oh, just for a little longer.
Stay until the scene is over,
the fear abated for the moment,
the quickened grief and terror eased,
the wreckage of my eyes drowsing...
Stay until you think that maybe this time
you can run fast enough.

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC AT MOUND CITY

Two thousand years later the sun
is a red eye misting
as locusts drone over Hopewell mounds.

The ground we walk softens,
tunnels into silence
small and furred.

As insects bow
false wing on false wing
from the stage of trees,

beyond amphitheatres
of borrowed pits, choruses
chant *watch out, watch out.*

A trilling of brilliant wings
ripples the river skin.
Battle-scarred, trailing

a regalia of cord
and acorn, the bass
closes the full mouth of night.

Blackout

Marblehead lighthouse is a great cornucopia
spilling its years, a telescope standing on end,
peering through history
into the rock and rumble of the lake.

Fish-rich on the shore
cottonwood trees spread
their net of shade
over dark summer
cottage and lawn.

Hours later two planets
puncture the warm neck of night.

Kathleen Burgess

Even the fanged, flying moon
is wanting. Someone
has stacked cordwood for a fire.
Breathing smoke through his hair,
rubbing light
into his hands, he paints
his face a primal glow.
It shines as he looks
over tenebrous water,
feels ash blown from Eastlake,
knows silent Orion, Davis-Besse,
Perry, Nine Mile, Sammis-Star,
Oyster Creek, Indian Point.

4'33"

"There they will discover silence, a way to change one's mind."

John Cage

The pianist settled
upon the bench, closed
the keyboard. His
stopwatch
and the handwritten score
controlled the premiere.
First movement
thirty seconds.
A late August wind
hissed in from the forest.
The audience leaned
forward.
David Tudor lifted
and shut the lid.
Second movement
two minutes, twenty-three seconds.
Audible pages, rain,
restive crowd. Again the lid's
descent. Third movement
one minute, forty seconds.
The musician rose
to fury,
bowed to patrons
booing in their finest clothes.

Unstrung, they raged and railed,
stormed from the hall.

"Music is continuous. It is only we who turn away." *John Cage*

After Cage's silent treatment the music industry drooped,
Acuff, Bernstein, Cowell, the Dominoes overblown.

Kathleen Burgess

With the death of music in the air, small
business bought no radio time. Record sales
wilted at Columbia and Capitol.
Hi-fis clogged their warehouses.
Dinah Shore couldn't open the Chevy door. Jack Benny's
Maxwell flattened Dennis Day. Big Mama Thornton
collared the dog. Howdy Doody,
his salary slashed, struck for a living wage. TV
repairmen retooled their shops for appliance repair.
Fashion fretted her pretty faces. Without music
the public sniffed at Hollywood's recycled
plots. Movie houses popped no corn, buttered
or plain. Without diversion couples divorced,
courtrooms filled?the only show in town.
Recession slid into depression.

Disorganized factories and offices
laid off workers. No money,
nothing to do, Americans
stayed home, restaurants closed.

*"I believe that the use of noise to make music will continue and
increase." John Cage*

On an otherwise empty stage, the piano rolled,
forgotten, desperately black, began
to shake, rattle, and rock.
Parched strings, frazzled like split ends,
and keys, dampers, jacks, hammers
bewitched the long silence.

OUT OF EDEN

We walked below water ripe
with burdens, falling through pools the way
love bore out bodies to mossy ground.

On layers of leaves, silk on velvet,
gold skin, shifting shade, limbs
entwined, murmurs adrift.

Sitting up I grasped a muscular movement
between us. Part myth, it threaded through the silence,
slid over my fingers, as through, detached,

it remained,
consigned to the backwash of paradise,
shunned in glistening leaves. We dressed,

rode away to the city, never again
made so close; or by closeness,
so dismayed.

THE DAY I FEARED TONY MILANO

I played where my father told me not to go,
by the bay near the pier.
And in the angry whitecaps I saw the body
and ran back through the hole in the fence.
I stopped a cop on his beat.
He looked into my eyes and believed.
I led him back to the water's edge.
Later, they questioned me away from the scene.
But I could still hear disembodied words from muted sentences
hit, shotgun, half a head, mafia, mafia, mafia, no witnesses,
mafia.
Mafia meant Italian, all ten-year-olds in the neighborhood knew
that.
After they drove me home, my father gave me a whack.

The next day my best friend Tony Milano rang my bell.
I hid, I cowered in my room.
Then I opened the blinds through the slats
saw Tony on the sidewalk hitting pebbles with his stickball bat
and glancing up at my window from time to time.
Each time he looked I quickly closed the slats and then opened
them,
letting the light in, out, in, out then in again,
until finally I got the ball from my dresser
and ran out the front door.

Thelma's on her way over to hit me up for twenty bucks. It's Wednesday night, eve of a brand new Bingo week, and Thelma's an addict. I rarely keep more than four dollars in my wallet, but on Wednesdays, Thelma knows I'll have an unbroken twenty to give her. I suppose that makes me an enabler, but I can't say no to her--she's my mother-in-law. Jake and I have been divorced for, oh, it must be seven years now, but somehow Thelma remains my mother-in-law. "Jake may have left you," she likes to say cheerily, "but there's nothing in those divorce papers that says *we* can't stay family." She's right. I've checked.

So when she drops by tonight, it won't be about Bingo money, it'll be about tightening the knot on those family ties. But unforeseen expenses will have come up since her last visit--they always do--and what's family for if not to see you through?

Last week she was short because she gave her neighbor, Mrs. Wimper (good one, Thelma) twenty dollars to have her dog put down. The poor dog was ying slow, lingering death, and Mrs. Wimper, who was lingering herself, finally understood what a kindness it would be to send the creature to a better place. "The was crazy about that yappy old hair-ball." Thelma said, her eyes glittery with tears, "but to her credit, she knew when to let go."

Never mind that Thelma lives in a building where pets are forbidden or that I know vets don't charge to put an animal down --I got teary eyed, too. It's the way she tells a story--lies from start to finish, no question about it--but somehow true, too, the way fiction is true in some parallel universe. What can I say? I'm a former English major.

And there she is now rapping the handle of her enormous old-lady umbrella on my door, her veiny, bulbous nose flattened against the glass pane.

"Thelma!" I exclaim. "What a surprise!"

"Phoebe!" she cries, just as surprised. She gives me a crushing hug, the prickly stubble on her chain abrading my collarbone. The prednisone she takes for her arthritis gives her facial hair. She shaves her chin and the several underchins below

every morning, but by seven in the evening her age has defaulted to sandpaper.

"I'm not going to stay," she promises, falling heavily into her usual spot on my loveseat. Another good one. It'll be hours before she gets around to bringing up the real reason for her visit, hours that I'll click off in minutes like beads on an endless rosary. But the long walk over here couldn't have been easy on her, either. Thelma's a hundred pounds overweight and every joint in her body screams for an artificial replacement. That umbrella is actually her cane, its metal tip angled into an L from the stress of her weight. I ought to mail her twenty bucks every week to spare us both the grief.

Except this is the only family tradition either of us have left. Other families in my subdivision are probably microwaving popcorn and setting up Scrabble boards in front of the TV for family game night this very moment. Thelma must have seen those families, their windows casting squares of buttery light on the dark November pavements, as she hobbled down my street, and wished, as I often have, that she could press her nose against those glowing panes instead.

"At least take off your coat," I say, though she's already wrestling herself out of it, "and let me get you something to drink."

I wait till she's on her second Bud Light before bringing up the subject of dinner.

Lord no, she wouldn't dream of putting me to the trouble, she did just drop in on me unannounced after all, and I work all day, I must be exhausted. I insist that it won't be any trouble at all to throw another frozen entree in the microwave. I remind her that I haven't turned on my oven in years, not since Declan, my son, moved into the dorm and I took up seriously with the gentlemen friend who usually takes me out to eat.

Declan, actually, isn't in college. He works third shift at Wal-Mart and shares an efficiency downtown with three other boys who have different schedules. Thelma thinks he's in medical school. Declan did take a Careers in Medical Technology class at Vo-Tech which I told Thelma all about at the time, but she was

only half -listening as usual. And though it's true that I'm occasionally taking out to dinner, my "gentleman friend" is actually a composite character. The part about the over is one-hundred percent fact, though. It's important to throw in at least one wholly credible detail when you tell stories. I probably heard that in Fiction 101, but I really learned it from Thelma.

Not that she's paying attention. She's on her third beer by now and she's getting easy. She wouldn't mind some dinner, she finally admits, but hates to think of the extra dishes I'll have to wash. I tell her we can eat out of the microwavable containers--that's what they're for!

"*Stouffer's*," she says with a sniff when I set the two individual serving six lasagnas down on the coffee table. "Winn-Dixie carries their own line, you know. Exactly the same as Stouffer's, made in the same factory by the same people even, but much cheaper."

I can't imagine how she knows this. Thelma doesn't own a microwave and her stove is just one more surface for old newspapers, doctors prescriptions, junk mail, and lapsed life insurance policies. She can't throw anything away, she says, because something important might be mixed in with the trash.

According to Jake, Thelma never cooked when he was a boy, either. He always said he grew up on Chinese take-out. They lived about the Weh-Mei Diner (Why Me, Jake thought it was called) and had hot take-out on the days his father actually brought his paycheck home, cold noodles for breakfast, and whatever was left over after that packed in his lunch box the rest of the week. But on payday, Jake said, there were always magic cookies for dessert. His father would read their fortunes out loud at the table. "My Chinese is a little rusty," he'd say, "but I think this says, 'A certain little boy will be rewarded with untold riches if he takes out the trash tonight.'" After he learned to read, Jake realized fortunes really said things like "Crumbs delight in drought."

"*Stouffer's* was on sale this week--actually cheaper per ounce than the store brand," I tell Thelma. "Plus I had a coupon--buy two, get the third free. Want another one? It'll only take four minutes."

Barbara Fischer

Jake thought I was a Goddess when we were first married. I made dinner--real dinners--every night. He'd study me with a blend of awe and lust as I washed broccoli in the sink and say, "How do you know what to do? Where's the directions?" I suppose I got over-confident, but it was so easy with Thelma as my standard of comparison. I hadn't thought to worry about women who could do whole other kind of cooking.

"Oh, no, dear," Thelma says now "You save that third dinner for the Boy."

She always refers to Declan, her only grandchild, as "the Boy," as if her were some generic brand of relative. Thelma never was the doting grandmother type. That used to bother me when Declan was a baby and walked and talked way ahead of schedule, or when she yawned at his ninety-sixth percentile national test scores when he was in middle school. It even bothered me that she didn't make a fuss when she jumped to the conclusion that he was in medical school. It doesn't bother me so much anymore. Now I hear "the Boy" and see something as blank and full as promise as a Bingo card in the early stages of the game. Winner? Loser? The odds say Loser, let's face it, but who knows? Those dried corn kernels could form a winning pattern yet.

"I've got *dozens* in the freezer, Thelma. And Declan, when he actually does stop by, can't spare the four minutes it takes to heat one. It's not like when he was thirteen and I always new where to find him, with his head in the fridge."

"Boys," Thelma sighs. "I remember. didn't know the meaning of full. Trying to grow into their big old feet, was my theory."

"And twenty-two-year-old 'boys'--remember them? They have better things to do than to have dinner with their mothers."

"That's boys," says Thelma. "Always running, always busy chasing after something crazy. It has to do with their big old feet. And the truth? They don't stop ever being boys. Jake's father? Still a boy the day I put him in the ground. And Jake? Don't even get me started on him."

"How about a drink, then. Want one?" I do, now she's going to get started on Jake. It takes less than twenty seconds

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to throw them together. Here's the recipe: fill one twelve-ounce number one-quarter full of Jim Bean. Hold under the tap until full. Repeat.

"Nature's painkiller," Thelma says after a long swallow. "That's what Jake's father always called liquor. Killed him, sure, but is he feeling any pain? No. He's at perfect peace."

When Jake's father was alive, Thelma used to say the Devil ha his room ready and waiting. Now, suddenly, he's in Heaven, enjoying perfect peace. I knew Rupert, Jake's father, and of course I don't believe he's in Hell, but sainthood doesn't exactly fit him either. My guess? Rupert's serving serious time in purgatory for all those good intentions he paved his road with.

"Rupert *was* saved," Thelma insists, as if we've been arguing the point. Thelma's Baptist--she doesn't believe in purgatory. But Rupert was born and raised Catholic, and even though he was lapse, like me, I think those Catholic rules still apply. Like Rupert used to say (angling his head toward Thelma behind her back), there's just no getting out of some contracts.

Still, several months before he died of cirrhosis of the liver, Rupert stood shivering on the altar of the First Third Baptist Church up to his skinny hairless shins in a galvanized tub of chilly tap water, the one-quarter Jim Beam humming through his bloodstream, wearing a flimsy white choir robe over worn out boxers, both of white turned transparent when he was dipped.

"You know what cold water does to a man?" he asked me in a squeaky falsetto at the reception in fellowship hal afterwards. "And me, on display before a church-full of sanctified Baptist ladies? Don't you believe for a minute they weren't checking out the goods." He shuddered. "If this don't get me to heaven, nothing will."

"So at least you covered your bets," I'd teased. "If nothing else."

And then, in the manner of drunks, he's turn disarmingly sincere. "That's part of it," he admitted. "I won't lie to you Phoebe. But I really did it for Thelma. Look at her. She's...*happy*. I always wondered what it would take, not very hard I have to admit, but this is what she'll remember, later, when she needs a

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bit of comfort and peace. And some of it's bound to rub off on me--surely someone's keeping score. We'll both get a little comfort and peace out of this yet." Then he winked. "Piece of what," he added, "I won't say."

"Oh, he had his cussed ways," Thelma says now, but she's smiling, dimples like thumbprints in bread dough. "But he *was* saved. For all he wrong reasons, sure. Not because he was sorry for his sins, but because he wanted to see me again, that much, in the life to come. Makes it hard to hold anything against him."

I know where she's going with this.

"That boy of mine, now," she says. "Another story together. I won't be seeing *him* in the life to come. But does he ever come to see me while he still has a chance? No. Too busy running. Know how I got him to spend Mother's Day with me?"

I had been hearing this story for years.

"Called him at four in the morning and told him my left side was numb. Spent the day together in the emergency room. That's the kind of trouble I have to go to just to get a two-dollar Mother's Day card."

"Maybe I'll use that on Declan this Mother's Day."

"You're too young to have your left side go numb on you. Who'd believe it?" Thelma studies her empty glass, tilts it to her lips, studies it again.

When I return with her refill, she says, "Mention that you have a present for him. I used that one on Jake just past Friday. That was his birthday, you know."

I know. November 1st, All Saint's Day, the day Catholics honor anyone who manages to squeak into heaven. The day before Halloween, is All Souls Day. That's when you remember the ones who couldn't quite wiggle through the loopholes. Which always makes me wonder, this time of year, when, exactly, Jake was born. Thelma says a little after midnight. I think the obstetrician's watch might have been fast.

"Turned forty-seven just this Friday past," Thelma says "or maybe forty-eight. Who has the energy to stop and figure? Mothers should get the present on their kids' birthdays anyway, not the kids. What'd they have to do but get pushed out and fasten

on to a titty? Lord, I miss my mother, but especially around my birthday. I've got one coming up, too."

Thelma will be eighty years old this Sunday. I've already got Sara Lee cupcakes in the freezer and can't-blow-'em out candles in my junk drawer. Thelma will make three or four wishes before they finally quit relighting themselves. And Jake, in fact, just turned forty-six. Scorpios, the two of them. Sign of the Sting.

I met Jake at a wild Halloween party when I was a naive twenty year-old English major and Jake was a twenty-four-year-old Casanova without a college credit to his name. Afterwards, I went directly to the university library and did research on Scorpios, who, I read, are the most sexual of the astrological signs--which was news to me. It was November 2nd by then. Jake and I spent All Saints Day in bed. Best birthday present he'd ever given, Jake always said.

"Know what I'd do if my mother was alive?" Thelma asks. "I'd tuck a hundred dollar bill inside a five dollar card and take her out to an all-you-can-eat buffet. I'd have the waitresses bring a cake to the table and sing happy birthday to her--they do that for free if it's your birthday--but on *my* birthday, not hers. I forgot when that was anyway."

I can see I'll have to rethink the Sara Lee cupcakes plan. I suppose I could take Thelma to Ponderosa this Sunday. But the hundred dollar bill? In her dreams.

"I miss my mother, too," I tell Thelma. And I do, though God knows she was a trial to me--not unlike Thelma, actually, though at the other end of the spectrum. My mother was an obsessive compulsive RN who was forever checking my blood pressure. She considered it a kind of lie detector test admissible in the Court of Mom. Cranky? Not yourself? Hiding something? Out came the cuff and squeeze ball apparatus. That November 2nd when I finally stumble dhome with a story about cramming two nights nonstop for midterms at the library (and the part about the library *was* true) my mother slapped that cuff on my bicep then lectured me about birth control.

But bless her, she *was* the doting grandmother type, my mother. She made a cross-stitch out of Declan's APGAR scores

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and laminated all his grade school report cards. Imagine the fuss *she'd* have made if she believed Declan was in medical school. Not that she'd have believed it. She knew you had to graduate college first, for one thing.

Thelma, now. I can tell her whatever I want, because let's face it, she isn't listening. Still, Thelma just *might* have mentioned my "gentleman friend" to Jake, because I hear all about *his* various "lady" friends. There was Tanya who had two children but who collected child support from four men; Eleanor, who made a living selling her eggs which were just sitting in her ovaries doing nothing anyway; Bonnie, the long-haul trucker with the homemade tattoo, "Mom," inside a lop-sided heart.

For the record, I am not jealous of these women. What does get me is the way Thelma perks up when she describes them. "She isn't a nice girl with a education, like you," he always adds disclaimer-like, but I hear the warmth--and hope--in her voice. But come to Thelma's eightieth birthday, will an of them be bribing the Ponderosa wait staff to sing "Happy Birthday" to her?

"So what did you give Jake for his birthday?" I ask

"I almost hate to tell you. Promise to to laugh till you hear me out." Thelma squints at her empty glass and goes through her puzzled-look routine. I get us both another.

"I bought Jake a Perpetual Mass Card," she says. "They sell them at St. Bartholomew's where I play Bingo Friday mornings. I had this crazy notion to get him something from and Rupert both. You know, I don't hold with that Catholic baloney, but Rupert did, and I thought, well, maybe he's got some pull now."

"Did you say a *Mass Card*?"

"A *Perpetual Mass Card*," she says. "No expiration date. Good for all eternity. My church family would disown me if they knew. But *their* prayers weren't working. Send him a nice woman who'll lead him to salvation, I had them praying till they were blue in the face--because that's what I thought it would take with Jake, a woman. But look at the sorry line-up he's been sent since he left you. Enough to make you lose faith." Thelma sets down her drink, and its not even empty.

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"So you know," she says. "I'm praying the Catholics pray for him. *Now* you can laugh."

He chins tremble as she covers her face with her hands. I leave my chair and sit next to her on the loveseat where I intended to do, what? Cry along with here, I suppose, because what if I were almost eighty years old and thought I might never see my own boy again, ever? But as it turns out, Thelma's laughing. Helplessly.

"The look on his face!" she finally cries. "He'd rather have socks, pajamas, handkerchiefs--any of those gifts boys hate--but instead he's got prayers for his immortal soul, forever! No turning those in for a cash refund!

Thelma and I laugh ourselves silly for a good five minutes. The tears stream down our faces.

"Best laugh I've had in years," Thelma gasps, hands pressed hard against her sternum. "Did my heart a world of good. I'll hardly miss my glycerin tablets this month--I used that money on the Mass Card."

You've gotta love the woman. She gets me every time, and I never see it coming. Her co-pay on prescriptions is twenty dollars, exactly, and she knows I'll offer to pay it. Don't I have an unbroken twenty in my wallet?

"Sure," I say, though I'm not sure I can afford it.

"Then listen to what I am getting Jake for Christmas. St. Matthew's, where I play Bingo Saturday mornings, already has their Angel Tree up. Every welfare kid in the parish has a wish list tag hanging off it. I'll get a present in Jake's name, put it under the Angel Tree, gift-wrapped. Think of the good that'll do *his* heart."

"What do you think this'll cost?" I ask wearily, because never mind that there's no Angel Tree, no welfare child with a wish list. Don't I always wind up paying for Jake's gift? Best birthday present he'd ever been given--that's what he told me that All Saints Day we spent in his bed. I'm still paying for that one.

"Can't say. Long time since I gave a boy presents."

Thelma hoists her enormous old-lady handbag onto her lap, fishes around in its bottomless depths and produces a cardboard tag with

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a shredded, perforated top. Jeffrey, age thirteen, shirt size x-large, shoe size 16 wide, wants a skateboard.

Someone at St. Matthew's must have the tag's other half, shredded and perforated at the bottom. If Thelma doesn't make good on this, she'll probably be blackballed from ever playing bingo there again. It would be just like her to switch the rules the minute I think I'm onto her game. This time she might actually be telling the truth.

Except what *is* Truth, really, besides a question only an old English major would ask? In the real world, there's plenty of room for customized versions. Here's mine: Thelma really does mean to see that this kid gets his skateboard. He's the archetypal Every-Boy with those big old feet of his, and on behalf of Boys everywhere, she will make his wish come true. And she's counting on me to make it happen. Which is touching, to think she still has that kind of faith in me, considering I've let her down big-time by failing to be the woman Jake wants to see, that much, in the life to come.

"How about if I pick up the skateboard and rope it off at St. Matthew's for you?" I may be touched, but I'm not crazy. I'm not about to hand Thelma money upfront.

"Oh, no, dear," says Thelma. "It's too much to ask. The gifts are due this Saturday, and that's no time at all to someone as busy as you."

"I could do it tomorrow after work. No trouble at all."

"Phoebe, you're a saint. I'll pay you back. Just don't forget to give me the receipt. So I can wrap it up for Jake." Still, she looks troubled. "Maybe you out to give me the present, too," she says, "before Saturday. Because if those nuns don't see me lay it on the pile, I may not get credit."

But what would stop Thelma, if she had the receipt *and* the goods, from turning them in to Toys-R-Us for a cash refund? And where would that leave Jeffrey on Christmas morning?

"Or here's an idea," Thelma says. "This is a terrible imposition and i hate myself for asking, but what if you picked me up Saturday morning and we delivered the present together?"

Because now that I think about it, how would I get a skateboard to St. Matthew's, short of riding it there myself?"

Thelma, apparently, doesn't trust *me*, which is more than forgivable, and again, I'm touched. She doesn't want Jeffrey to get stuffed on Christmas morning, either.

"I hope we're doing the right thing," I say to Thelma as I'm driving her home. "I hope that boy doesn't hurt himself on that skateboard."

"But it's anonymous," Thelma reminds me. "His mother won't be able to track us down and sue if he breaks his neck. And didn't your boy used to have a skateboard? And isn't he still in one piece?"

"More or less," I admit. Also more or less, Thelma bought it for him--with money from me, if I remember correctly, for flannel pajamas for Declan.

"Black Label," Thelma says. "That's the brand you want to get. Hard to find and it'll cost, but generic won't do here, not if we're going for magic. That's what Declan says."

"And Declan told you this...when?"

"Oh, sometime or other when he was over," Thelma says with a dismissive wave.

I don't know what surprises me more--that Declan goes to see *her* or that she called him something other than "the Boy."

"He says you need to check the seashore channel and have it sent special delivery," Thelma goes on. "Sounds like a lot of trouble and expense to me, that's what I told him, but you know what he said? He said, 'Leave it to Mom--she can handle anything.' His exact words."

E-bay, she means. I'll have to go on E-Bay, bid on a Black Label, and have it shipped Fed-Ex. Magic doesn't come cheap. But it's not the money I'm worried about.

"You know that poor boy's mother will never see him again," I say, "once he gets those wheels." I can still see the look on Declan's face when Thelma gave him his. His thoughts might have been broadcast over a loudspeaker: "A means of escape!" he'd rejoice, whereupon he pulled his head out of the fridge and

hurled himself away from me. Helmetless.

"But that's boys," Thelma says, unconcerned. "They ride off. His mother'll hand it--if she's any kind of mother at all. And the truth? They don't go far. Look at ours, still within spitting distance. Did I mention that yours coming with us this Saturday, if you wouldn't mind to swing by and pick him up? Wants to test drive that skateboard in the church parking lot, bet you a dollar, so don't bother wrapping it. I'll dig up a stick-on bow. I'm sure to have a used one laying around."

"I'll bring the bow," I tell Thelma. A flattened old used one with the stick worn off won't do here, not we're going for magic.

"Save your money," says Thelma. "Boys don't care about fancy bows."

"Mothers do."

"Oh, all right, then. Get an extra special nice one, for his mother. She can re-use it."

"She won't re-use it. She'll put it in the box with his plaster-of-Paris handprint from Kindergarten and his homeward Mother's Day Cards."

"You're right," says Thelma after a minute. "*She does* save it. But she doesn't put it away in a box. She leaves it laying around so she can come across it from time to time, to remind herself of the look on his face that Christmas morning."

"When he went running out the door without a backward glance."

"But the way he beamed before he went! Like a hundred-watt-light bulb! Can't you just see it?" says Thelma. "That's what she'll remember. Whenever she get down in the dumps and thinks, 'Off he went without so much as a backward glance,' she'll come across that bow--make sure you get an extra special nice one--and then she'll remember that look on his face, and the rest will hardly matter.

This is going to have to be on spectacular bow.

"You know what?" I say. "He doesn't run off without a backward glance. He does look back. When he's halfway out the door, he turns around and gives her this...look. Almost like he's a



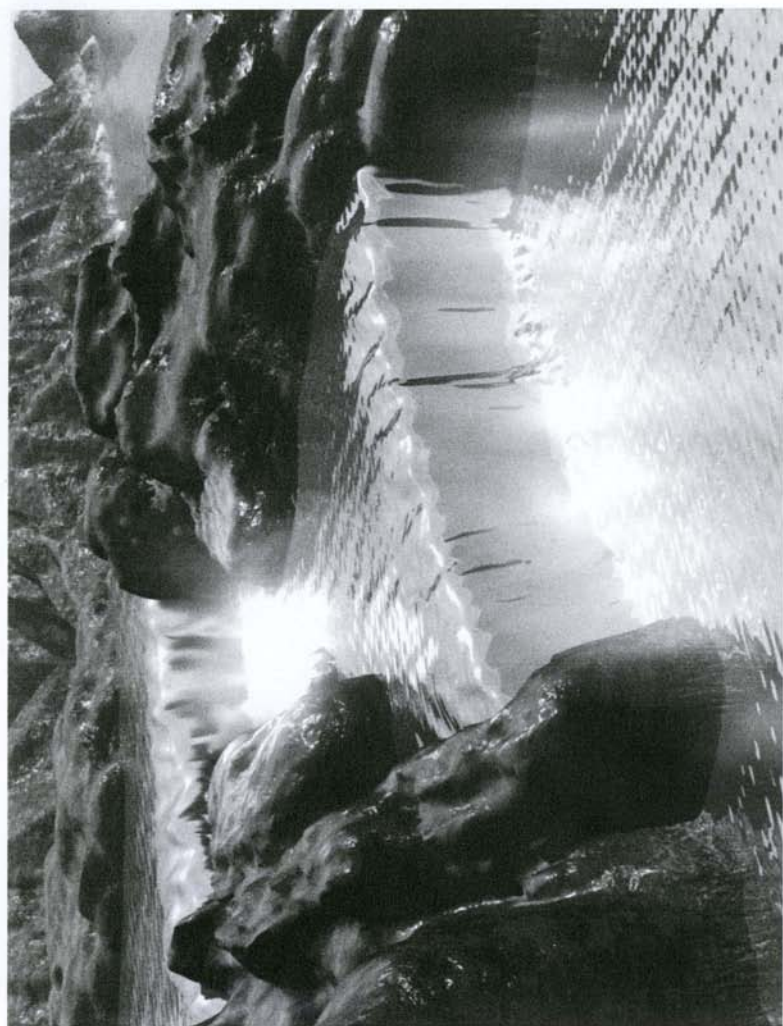
"Heather's Touch"

Ann Adkins



Mandy Springer

"Spring Water"



Joe Grubb

“Waterfalls”



Sonperes Subsermsri

“The Reflection”



Kyle Conrad

"Untitled"



Shelby Carrington

“Paps”



Jessica Killgo

"Untitled #1"



Sarah Wetmore

“Colt”

little bit sad to be leaving. *That's* what she'll remember."

"That's the best you can do?" asks Thelma. "A...look? That boy does better than a look. He clomps back and gives his mother a big old hug. Skateboard pokes her in the ribs because it's under his arm, but still, manages to crush the breath right out of her."

"That skateboard needs to be from his mother," I say firmly. "Otherwise, no hug. Just a look."

"Put it on the gift tag, then, 'From your loving mother.'"

"And 'P.S., Wear your helmet.' I'm putting that, too."

"Jake's name goes on the gift tag for the helmet," Thelma says. "Did I mention that he'll be with us, too?"

IS THAT YOU, DEAR?

Hallucinations are a subtle kind
of turbulence.

The plane is the body,
wrapped in sky-blue nightgown.
The bumping glass on a tray table
is a trembling cocoa before bed.

Downdrafts are tricks of shadow and light,
and eyes that don't know
they're the magician.
Rattles, jerks, are temperature
fleeing the blood.

Not everyone takes to these ghosts the same.
A child cries. A young woman laughs.
A wife comes all over protective.
A middle-aged lady stoops her head in prayer.
The pilot ought to reassure the passengers
that it's just nothing, they'll be out of it soon,
but the pilot's dead.
As dead as his photograph.

Her jolted hand is messy and brown.
The cup almost dropped.
There's just a mouthful or two
at the bottom.
A red light flashes...
"Fasten your seat-belt,
it'll be dawn before you know it."
That insistent sign doesn't realize
that dawn in her seat-belt.

SIEGE

All night, freezing rain--the lights
won't make up their mind;
then everything's dark. Trees are walking dead.

In the tar pit of time, a transformer
groans like a dinosaur, becomes extinct.
The turncoat furnace sleeps.

Daybreak we are hostages of the ice storm,
light candles, stove, put a bucket
under the leak by the sliding doors,
resuscitate the fireplace, check for damage.

Storm--odd word for weather
so calm, where ice builds by degrees,
immures us inside a cold hurricane's eye.

The neighborhood is a breath
of blown glass. *Crack, crash*--trees discard
sodden branches. A dove is still
on a telephone wire of silver stalactites.

Debris is strewn over the battlefield
of tree bones. Broken limbs have toppled
the fence, could crush the roof.
We need a generator, radio batteries.
Is there enough food?

Wounded are throwing shivers
helter-skelter against the windows.
A transparent antler points
as a ghost staggers to shelter.

The phone's gone dead.
In million offices, packs of wolves
circle, move closer, with fiery silver eyes.

Bruce Lader

GEOGRAPHY OF DREAMS

In church, her lights would sometimes
go out. A bad habit, or merely
a foreshadowing of the life to come?
Nightfall spreads out almost silently
through the partly imagined city.
It is early spring. She is standing
under a palm tree, lactating nervously.

THE ROMANCE OF ATTRITION

When you arrive in the morning
all of the letters and all of the numbers
are lined up along the front of the room,
waiting for their assignments. A little later,
the colors arrive, anticipating with great wealth.
They are followed by the fruits and vegetables.
Many years ago, or perhaps it was only in a dream,
or in something you read, a child on the sidewalk
looked up at you, and asked you if you were
a fruit or vegetable. Is this the voice
of experience? You try to play your cards right.
Sometimes you go to the store.
Perhaps you are something to eat,
a number, for example, a number,
or a flowering shrub.

PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

You come to stay in a city full of closets.
You spend the first few days in a kind of
holding tank. But then all of the facts
come forward, wanting to speak to you,
all of those ears, noses, and throats,
all of those eyes, as deep as coal mines,
and some of them nearly as dark.
The coal dust settles over everything.
You arrive here by train or by fire engine.
In another life, you will arrive
by paintbrush or by crayon.

BIRD WATCHING IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

You come away from a country full of
exclamation points. You spent the last few days
in a kind of conditional surrender. But then,
all of the animals come forward, wanting
to lick your face and bite your fingers,
all those parrots, and emu, and thrushes,
the polished gems of every continent,
their eyes as dark as gold mines,
and some of them nearly as deep.
The gold dust settles nowhere, touching nothing.
You arrive here only briefly, by rocket ship
or by dumptruck. In a better life,
you would arrive by onion and by noodles.

MY LIFE AS A DANCER

For Judith Mikita

When I was a dancer I could do anything.
I could leap like a deer.
I could spin like a dervish.
I could go under fences as fast
and easy as a cat. When I performed
my going-under-fences dance, the audience
rose to their feet and cheered.
When I was a dancer, nothing could hurt me.
A fall could not hurt me.
I did not fall unless I wanted to fall.
When I was a dancer,
gunshots could not hurt me.
Knives could not stick in me.
Dynamite exploding could not blow me up.
All the dynamite explosions
only made me dance faster and dance better.
I dance with the kettle drums booming in my ears.
I danced with the thunder booming in my ears,
with the lightning flashing over my head.
I danced with the trumpets blaring in my ears.
I danced with the sweet milk
of the flutes and temple bells in my mouth.
I danced to the sound of the cimbalom,
the accordion, and the nose flute.
I danced to the music of loons,
and to the music of motorboats.
I danced to the music of babies crying.
I danced to the music of delivery trucks backing up.
I danced to the music of moonlight on fallen snow.
I had the most beautiful costumes.
I had one costume made of nothing but spider webs.
I called it my spider web costume.
I had a costume made of spaghetti,
a costume of hair.

F. Keith Wahle

I had a costume made of fingerprints.
For my chromium dance, my costume
was made entirely of chrome. It was heavy,
by my body bore it as easily as a thought.
For my dance of the horrors of war,
I made my costume from the discarded bandages
of wounded soldiers. Their blood on the fabric
was like a badge of pain and forgiveness.
I had costumes of memory,
costumes of petals dropped on the surface of a pond.
There were brutal costumes of chains and steel wool.
There were beautiful costumes of colored lights.
There were costumes of bones,
and medicine, and sprockets.
When I dance in my costume of madness,
the audience gasped, and stared
in uncomfortable fascination.
When I danced in my costume of lipstick,
the audience longed for my touch on their mouths.
The only time I danced in a costume of smoke,
the fire alarms went off,
and we were carried from the theater
by beautiful men in rescue uniforms.
When I danced, I could dance anywhere,
and I could dance on anything.
I danced on chairs and I danced on tables.
I danced on lamps, and stoves,
and the backs of running horses.
I danced at the tops of ladders.
I danced waist-deep in water,
with wild fish swimming between my knees.
I did sensual, erotic dances in bed.
When I danced with men,
their breath coursed into me,
like Satan breathing sin into the world.
When I danced with women,
their bodies flowed into mine,

F. Keith Wahle

like rainwater falling on empty ground.
I was born dancing.
From childhood, I have been a dancer,
before instruction, before tap class,
before ballet, before dynamite,
before kettle drums, before Arts Council money.
And when my own children were born
they danced from my body like angels.
When a skeptic asked me to prove
that God exists, I said, "We can dance.
What more do you need to know?"
We all dance every day,
the dance of eating, the dance
of sleep, the dangerous,
glorious dance of sexual intercourse.
I celebrate the dance of arms and feet,
the dance of ears and fingernails
and bellybuttons. I dance the dance
of breasts, and buttocks, and pubic hair.
Last Saturday night, I danced
in my underpants for a crowd of people
who paid their admission at the door
and sat in the dark to watch me.
When I took my clothes off,
and they saw me naked,
I think they held their breath.
Naked on the floor, I was dancing my life,
I was dancing back to the woods.
That is how I want them to think of me--
dancing in my underpants,
or dancing naked, or dancing
with my clothes on.
I want them to think of me dancing.
And when I do my last dance,
when I dance into the ground,
when I dance back to the stars and planets,
I hope they will think of my life.
I hope they will think of my life as a dancer.

F. Keith Wahle

SUMMER

Michael stepped into the kitchen and noticed Helen was sitting at the glass table looking out the dark window framed with delicate flowers. She rested her chin on the palm of her pale thin fingers.

His feet were still wet and he could feel the cold tile floor. He shivered as water dripped on his back. The sun hadn't risen yet; they both always woke before the sun.

Michael sat down at the round table after pouring two tall glasses of orange juice. The chair squeaked slightly as he leaned forward sliding her one of the glasses. She looked from the window to him, as if just noticing that he had entered the room. He took a deep breath and smiled. Helen tilted her head sideways peering at him waiting.

"You know, I was thinking that we should take a trip. It's been a while since we have gone anywhere."

He had remembered the last trip they took. It was to the beach in the south. Helen had liked the ocean's constant movement. He had liked how she smiled when she was near it.

Helen dropped her hand from her chin and took the glass in her hand. She lifted it up slowly. She smiled and shrugged.

Michael nodded. "I was thinking about leaving tomorrow and just driving until we got tired, sleep in the car until we are rested and drive again."

Helen looked over the brim of her glass. "What about your job?? She asked.

He just looked down at his glass staring at the pieces of floating pulp leaning on his elbows.

The room was quiet. There was nothing of the outside world coming into the room. He could hear the hum of electricity running through the refrigerator. Helen looked at Michael, he could see that her blue eyes were discolored and her dark black hair contrasted against her pale skin. He smiled.

They sat in silence, both of them staring into their orange juice. The sun wouldn't be up for another hour and he had a long drive ahead of him. Taking one more drink he stood up from the

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table and left Helen sitting in the dark kitchen to get dressed.

~*~

Putting the glasses on the towel beside the sink to dry with the others she watched his car disappear in the twilight morning. They hadn't put any of the glasses in the cabinet for a while.

The sound of cars humming by came through the house. Leaving the kitchen Helen went into the bedroom and lay down in the bed. Smoothing out the sheets with one of her hands she could feel that the sheets were damp.

Pulling the covers over her she closed her eyes. What else could they have said?

"When do you want to leave?"

"Now."

"Do you need anything?"

"No."

"Let's burn it."

She looked around the room. The shaded features of pictures on the wall, a closet door, and a mirror were all she could make out through the weak light coming through the shaded windows. A hot shower would be nice.

She avoided turning on the radio or flipping on the lights. The light would be too bright to adjust to.

The coldness of tile against her feet lasted until she flicked on the hot water. She couldn't remember how long ago it was since she had showered. She felt dirty. Her mother was coming over today. There was a call yesterday; it was her mother. They both sat on the phone in silence for about thirty minutes before her mother claimed she was coming over.

Helen stepped back into the kitchen with her flack hair in strings dripping with water. She had finished taking her pills and now turned her attention to the living room. It was dark as the rest of the house but nothing in the room had been touched.

Something caught her attention. It was lying on the floor in front of the coffee table. Slowly, she walked and stood. It was a small silver sticker star.

Helen picked it up and walked through the dark house and stopped in front of the closed door. On the front there was a poster with the days of the week printed out. She placed the sticker in line with the ones on Fridays.

She hadn't seen her mother for a while now; they hadn't been talking to one another across the phone and now she was coming over.

~*~

"You haven't called me at all!" Her mother said as she stepped into the house. She was clutching a small leather purse. It was bright red, just like the lip stick she was wearing. Her mother glanced around the house, just to see if Helen was being the good obedient wife.

"Yes, I have been busy." She sat down on the small sofa resting in front of a wooden table.

"This place is pretty well cleaned up."

"Yes."

Helen picked up an old magazine and flipped through it, looking at the pretty scenery of some far off land.

"How is Michael?"

She sat up and looked out the window. "Like always."

There was a gray light coming through, it was a cloudy day. "How long has it been now, two months?"

Her mother raised a brow expectantly. Her mother liked the idea of knowing what her daughter was thinking. Helen looked back at the old woman sitting on the edge of the couch still holding her purse. "What did you say?"

"You could go back to teaching."

"No, it is best that I stay home for a while."

Her mother stopped smiling. "Oh," she touched Helen's arm "that's fine dear."

The old woman stuffed her purse between the cushion and her outer thigh. "There is no use of this."

Helen looked at her mother blinking her blue eyes at the old woman. The mother looked down at the table staring at the stack of old magazines. The sound of a car driving by kept Helen

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from the silence. The bushes outside shivered slightly, naked to the cold.

~*~

"Come in."

Mr. Vance was sitting behind his dark wood desk holding an elegant silver pen. "Have a seat right there." He nodded his wrinkled head to the leather chair while twirling his pen between two of his fingers.

After taking a seat Michael looked at Mr. Vance. He wore a three-piece suit. A golden chain connected to a watch in his vest pocket. The room smelled of strong cologne. "You wanted to see me?"

"Yes I do" he put down his pen leaning back in his chair propping his polished shoes on the desk "we both know how hard you work for this company." He frowned slightly as he curly brows hooded his eyes. "But the reports coming from the accounting section have been totally incomprehensible."

Michael nodded. "I see Carl, my team works hard as they can" he glanced down at the folder on the desk "but they send everything to me to look over."

Mr. Vance dropped his feet and leaned forward in his leather chair. "I know this, Mike, but you usually clean everything up pretty nicely." He raised a brow as he looked into his eyes. "You're our best accountant."

"I try."

"Well, did you know that because of this poor organization we've lost a thousand dollars in three different cases?"

"No Carl, I hadn't noticed any of that." Michael leaned forward on his elbows and looked at the folder. The papers were wrinkled, he didn't remember doing the calculations. "I'm really sorry about that."

"You're sorry?" Mr. Vance got up from his chair and walked over to a small counter with drinks. Shoving his hands in his pockets he turned and looked at Michael with a small frown.

Mr. Vance nodded and kept staring at Michael. He just stared back. He could hear the ticking of the clock, the breathing

office and the whirl of the fan overhead.

"Well."

"Well what?"

Michael frowned and threw up his hands. "Are you going to fire me?"

The boss walked over to the corner of the desk and sat down, he leaned forward his face close to Michaels. He could feel Mr. Vance's hand on his shoulder, his voice was low "I was thinking about it but" he leaned back rubbing his wrinkled face, Michael could see hints of gray all through his curls "I have decided against that idea completely."

"Why not?" Michael rose up in his chair "you just said I wasted a thousand dollars on poor organization and you know it is my fault."

He walked around beside Michael and crouched down beside him, he put his arm around his shoulders. Taking a deep breath through his nose he squeezed Michael. The clouds hung low in the sky outside his window. Michael could see the cars in town moving through the roads quickly and purposefully.

"Thirteen years ago I started this company with four people; my brother, my father, you, and myself. And since then you have proved yourself time and time again. Your work is flawless and you never let up. Mr. Vance paused and looked out the window with Michael. "We're the only two left."

Mr. Vance got up and stood beside him "You're not dumb, we both know that."

"Oh, is that so?" Michael clenched his teeth leaning back in his chair. "Well, it is just..."

Mr. Vance shook his head and walked back in front of Michael. "No, it isn't just anything, it is one thing and we both know what that is Mike."

Michael frowned. "Look" he stood up "If you think you know exactly what is wrong with me then tell me, but I will let you know right now that you are completely wrong, you don't have a damn clue."

Mr. Vance took in another deep breath, closed his eyes, and nodded as if expecting to hear this. "I know this." He reached

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his ringed hand and patted Michael's shoulder. "But I am worried about you, not because of the money we lost."

Michael didn't say anything; he just stood there looking at Mr. Vance with his mouth working trying to say something. Nothing, just the sound of the fan.

"Before you can say anything else, I know the situation you and Helen are going through and I am going to let you slide by this one; of course I hope you get things worked out Mike."

"It will never happen."

Michael took Mr. Vance's thick fingers in his hand.

"Thanks."

The old man handed the folder to Michael as he sat back behind his desk. "Give this folder to Carl, he is waiting outside the door. He said he would take over for you until you feel like you are able to handle things again."

Michael frowned. "What about the real estate section, who is going to take of that?"

"He is."

"So he is taking double?"

"Yes"

The businessman stepped out of Mr. Vance's office frowning.

~*~

The sun hadn't come up yet and Helen was sitting at the table sipping her orange juice. Her husband came in from the garage and took a seat in front of her. He picked up his glass and took a sip.

"I packed the car."

"That's good." She traced the top of the glass with her fingertip "what are expecting to happen?"

He sat down his glass and looked out the window. There was nothing to be seen on the outside. "I really don't know, I think we just need something different." He looked back at her; she was resting her chin on her hand. "Do you think this is a good idea?"

Looking she shrugged slightly "I really don't know." "Do you even want to go?" he smiled "Or are you doing this for me?"

"Honestly?" she raised a brow "I am doing this for me."

"I think that is how it is suppose to be" he nodded and picked up his glass and took another sip.

They sat in silence, there wasn't much left in either glass; they both know it was time to go. The woman looked at her husband who had aged too fast and the husband looked at his wife who had died too soon. They both smiled.

She held up her glass. "To Summer." He pinged his glass against hers and finished the last orange drop.

5th FLOOR HOLY GHOSTS

I felt the voice of Jesus
spilling through a Japanese dream-box.

Shaking incoherently.

The shadow of his dream,
a nonchalant silhouette upon 27" Buddhist gold,
And all paths taken end.

I dare to taste-test thought.
39 cents in my pocket,
Zero in the bank.

Making Life worth living,
through the glass of an ancient spirit holder,
Silently on the horizon of my tomorrow.

Molding my master status,
Dreaming like fog over blind imagination.
The pen becoming my pivot, black becoming my tears.

Questioning role conflict of a childhood memory;
It's a little clearer from here,
But you probably couldn't relate.

My fingers two-stepping with thought
through the eyes of education,
Reflecting bachelor party expectation.

I regret getting lost in this placebo goal.
An artificially inseminated dream and a stop watch.

Who are the poets among me?

The readers are dying to know.

Eric Jones

SECOND MOTHER

My Second Mother stands
Permanently
At the nearest corner
(with reason and decision)
I climb her
Thick body till
I'm under her green dress and
Her arms wrap around
Only me
Her brown skin smiles a smile that
Digs my grave
I squeeze one showy, white flower
From her brow
It blackens and dies before me
And
I swear never to rob her again
I let my limbs dangle while
Counting
(upside down)
the names carved on her side
I count seven
Seven before me
Who shared in her solitude
I kiss the deep red scars
As my own signature
(this is my age)
I whisper in her hollow ear
I tell her:
"Save a place
for only me --
as a magnolia tree
in the next life.
Right beside you Nowhere else."
The wind whistles
An affirmation,
A promise.

Amy Fuller

THE BEAST

A modern response to W.B. Yeats' "The Second Coming"

Maybe Yeats was right about that rough beast;
sometimes I think he sleeps beside me,
bent into a half-moon,
gentle angles pressed to my back,
murmurs muffled into skin curves.
This is the sleep of the Spiritus Mundi,
the hurricane eye of the gyre.
In the morning, he wakes to the sound of his pager
playing Beethoven's fifth symphony, distorted,
a shrill anthem which punctures dawn with its tinny voice.
His thighs are thick, but not slow, William.
The layers are assembled with quick precision:
the three-piece suit, the power tie, crisp shirt,
wing-tipped shoes, phone and computer, palmtop, pager.
The wire that runs from his ear to the clip on his breast,
then down to the phone leaves his hand free
to write with his inkless pen onto the small square
which swallows words,
tucks them into pockets of atoms.
The automaton twists and jerks to every beep
and pop and whirl from his mechanisms,
jumps to the vibrations pressed to his side.
He calls to "touch base" but there is no touching;
only the exchange of itineraries,
and you'd swear you hear him check you off.
When he slouches home, there is an almost
imperceptible trace of metal to his kiss,
almost a steel, hollow clunk to his laughter
as he greets you,
ignores the shadows of your smile that bounce
like bright lights off the shiny surface of his face.
Wires and wireless are laid aside,
batteries recharged.
Layers peel away,

Kathryn Lizee

the ceremony dims,
till only skin and bone remain.

CONTRIBUTORS

ANN ADKINS is a senior art major with an emphasis in graphic design and psychology minor. She is a member of American Advertising Federation, Visual Arts guild and Student Activities Council. In April, she is designing and producing a Fashion Show for Sevilla Designs clothing line.

KATHLEEN BURGESS is a featured poet in *Pudding Magazine--the International Journal of Applied Poetry* #47, published in *Kalliope*, *Elastic Ekphrastic: Poetry on Art, Poets on Tour*, and *Icon*. Among journals and anthologies, Kathleen Burgess is an associate editor at Pudding House Publications. She is currently living in Chillicothe, Ohio where she teaches music to more than 600 pre-school through 5th grade students in the Chillicothe City Schools.

SHELBY CARRINGTON a native of Lewis County, is an art education major at Morehead State University. He is experienced in a diverse variety of media including: drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, with a concentration in graphic design and digital imaging. His father, affectionately called "Paps" by his family, made an ideal subject to photograph while engaged in his activity of choice: admiring the outdoors.

KYLE CONRAD, a native of Chagrin Falls, Ohio, is a senior graphic design major at MSU with an emphasis in photography. Future plans include graduate school and travel. Kyle and his wife, Monica, currently live in Maysville, KY where they own and operate a restaurant.

RICHARD FEIN has been published in many web and print journals. He has two personal web sites on which he has posted his poetry and photography. They are:
expage.com/page/richardspoems & *www.pbbase.com/bardofbyte*

BARBARA FISCHER is a resident of Versailles, Kentucky. Her work has appeared in *Wind Magazine*, *Sycamore Review*, *Louisville Review*, *Willow Oaks Review*, *Chaffin Review*, and *Kudzu*, among others. She also has a story forthcoming in the next issue of *Tampa Review*.

AMY FULLER is a junior English/French major. She plans to move to Philadelphia to attend graduate school for library sciences.

JOHN GREY lives and writes in Providence, Rhode Island. His favorite works from *Inscape* include F. Keith Wahle, Janet Thorning, and Eric Jones.

JOE GRUBB is a sophomore art major at Morehead State University with a particular interest in computer arts and animation. He has plans to obtain a MFA in game design and animation after graduating from MSU. "Waterfalls" was created in Bryce 5 and touched up in Photoshop 7.

JEAN HULL HERMAN, editor of *Mobius, the Poetry Magazine* (an international journal) since 1989, believes that - as she would put it - we have a commonality, we humans, in that we turn to poetry to try to discuss and explain love, loss, and hope. Jean is becoming a much published author - *Starving For The Marvelous* is her first book - and is a lecturer/ speaker (DE roster of artists) and teacher in Delaware. Her work-in-progress is *Springer as Bulfinch*.

JAMES HUMPHRIES is a senior art major with an emphasis in graphic design from Springfield OH. James has a strong desire to pursue a career in the entertainment industry, designing promotional materials for music and film.

PATRICK JOHNSON lives in Kentucky and is currently working on an English major and a creative writing minor.

ERIC JONES lives and writes in Morehead, Kentucky.

JESSICA KILLGO is a junior art major. She loves to manipulate her surroundings to create scenes for her photographs. The set up for this photograph included simple household items such as a glass coffee table, mirror, and a lava lamp.

BRUCE LADER is the founding director of the community-based Bridges Tutoring, Inc., a non-profit organization that educates students from diverse cultures. He has poems in *Margie*, *RE:AL*, *Sojourn*, *Poetry*, *New York Quarterly*, *Poet Lore*, *Green Hills Literary Lantern*, *Roanoke Review*, and other journals.

KATHRYN LIZEE is a freelance writer living in central Kentucky. Her works have appeared in *The Listening Eye*, *Urban Spaghetti*, *The Peralta Press*, *Pacific Review*, *Common Threads* and others. She has received numerous awards including first prize in the Ohio Poetry Association's Autumn Equinox Competition, second prize in the 2001 National American Pen Women Poetry competition, and second prize in the 2001 Best of Ohio Writers poetry competition. She has read at numerous venues, most notably the Seattle Art Museum. Her newest work appears in *Mentress Moon* and *Blood and Thunder: Musings on the Art of Medicine*. Her two goats, three dogs and handsome husband provide support and inspiration.

MANDY SPRINGER is a senior art major with a concentration in photography, painting, and ceramics. She has recently been exploring the theme of human interaction with nature in her artwork. Mandy has discovered alternative photography processes that enable her to apply photographs to endless varieties of surfaces and to incorporate painting and ceramics into her photography.

SONPERES SUBSERMSRI was born in Bangkok Thailand. He received his BA in visual arts from Rangsit University (Thailand). He began his art career in 1999 as an artist, graphic designer and art director. He has participated in many exhibitions with groups and individually. He came to the United States in 2003 and is attending MSU's graduate program in art studio.

F. KEITH WAHLE is the author of two poetry collections: *A Choice of Killers* (1998) and *Farewell to Happy Town* (2004). In the past year, he has performed at the College Hill Town Hall, The Mockbee, the Playhouse in the Park Alteractive series, and the Shaker Heights Public Library in Cleveland. He also gave a poetry reading at the Kentucky Folk Art Center in Morehead, Kentucky last fall. He has made collaborative performances with Colleen McCarty, Sarah Mann-Drake, Tara Michelle Guilfoil, and Judith Mikita. He has a MFA from the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. His poems and prose poems have appeared recently in *Lake Effect*, *Pudding*, *Cincinnati Review*, and *Forklift Ohio*.

SARAH WETMORE is a graduate senior at MSU. Her passion for horses is evident in much of her artwork. Sarah primarily works with photography and bronze sculpture.

inscape

morehead state university